Lovely Strange Dark

ULTRABAROQUE DEPROGRAMMER

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CHAPTER 24

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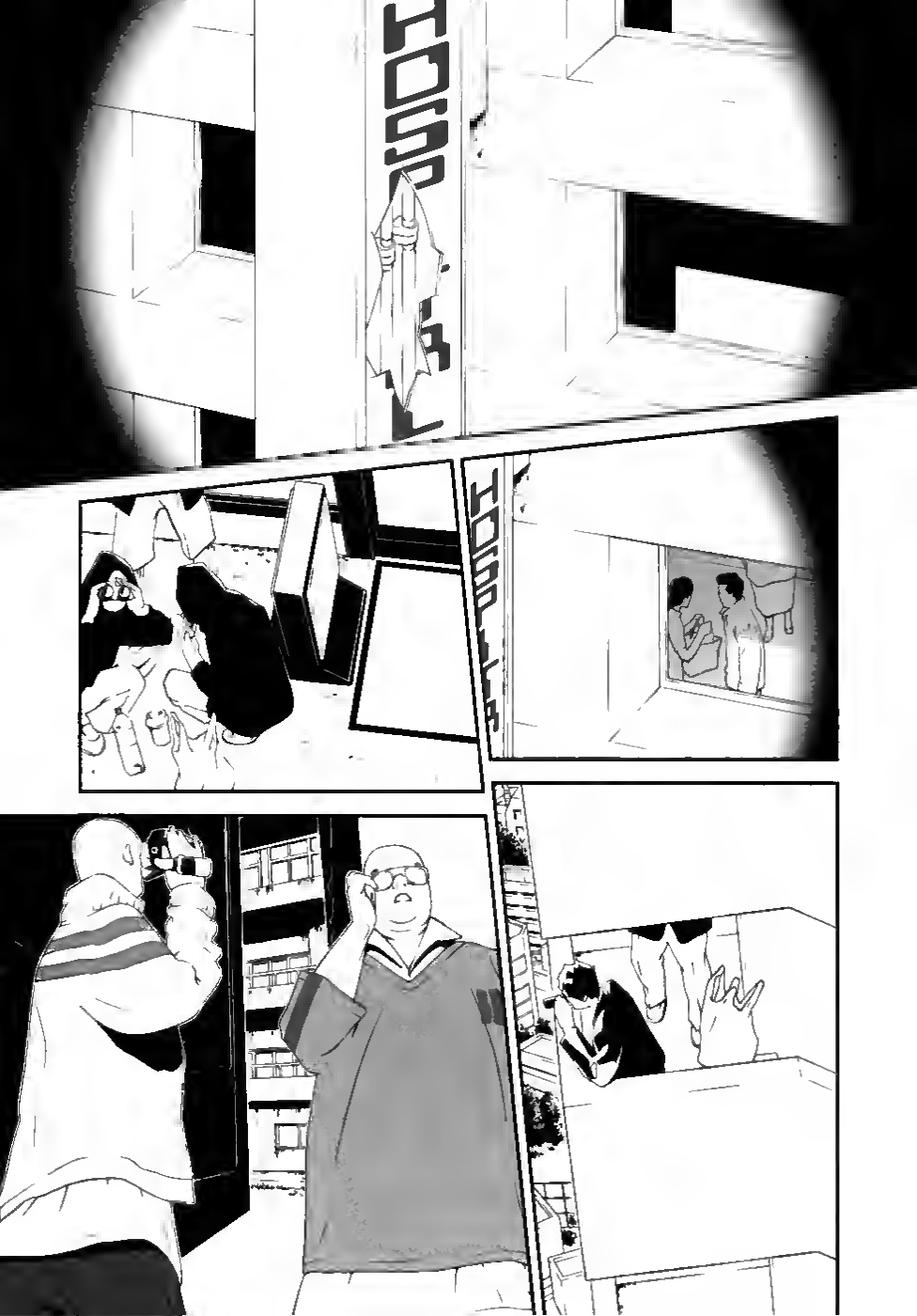

CHAPTER 24 TELE-DEPROGRAM 5
UM,
I KNOW YOU WERE DOING THIS BACK AT THE WORKSHOP, BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO WAIT ON ME.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
WE WANT TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
BUT WITH YOU FOLLOWING ME AROUND ALL THE TIME, IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE WATCHING ME ——
RUSTLE

WHERE...?
UNDERGRO
LOOKS LIKE A SUBWAY IN EUROPE
Kthnk
Kthnk
SCREE
Vm
VmVm!
THERE YOU ARE!
THANKS FOR COMING OUT!
MAYBE SOME-WHERE IN LONDON?
—— I WAS HAPPY LIKE THAT.
HE PROBABLY TAKES THE TRAIN TO WORK
LOOK CLOSELY, CALAVERA.

YEAH, HE HASN'T BEEN RESPONDING FOR A BIT NOW.
...
!!!!
DON'T LOSE YOUR NERVE
HE WOULDN'T HAVE PROPOSED A DIVE LIKE THIS IF THERE WAS NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS.
WE STILL HAVE TWO OF THE THREE WE CAN KEEP WORKING.
WE'LL GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE.
OUR FORMER SELF DEPROGRAMMED HIM.
HE'S BEEN BROKEN DOWN
I DON'T REMEMBER THIS SCENE, BUT IT MIGHT BE A MEMORY OF SOMETHING THE SUBJECT SAID.
—DEPROGRAMMER?
DOES ANYTHING COME TO MIND, DEPROGRAMMER?

—so
THIS GUY IS SAYING HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE DEPROGRAMMED
WRONG.
It was the deprogrammer who met face to face with the subjects and the families and businesses that requested the service.
We're looking at the dregs of our mindscape
This guy is formed from the remnants of the deprogrammer's old self doubt.
For instance, when he felt like he could have done better at the end of a job
THE DEPROGRAMMER DREAMED HIM UP.
THE SAME APPLIES TO THE GROWTH OF A NEURO-CAVE
THEY GROW OVER TIME OUT OF OUR EXPERIENCES

WE CAN'T DAWDLE AROUND. LET'S GO.
TODDLE
SO WHAT HAPPENS IF HIS SELF-DOUBT MANIFESTS IN NUMBERS...?
OH!

Seized
PRIVATE
Evacuation Order
EEP OUT
CLUB DGR
clack
clack

GOT A MINUTE?
clack
ABOUT THAT ABANDONED HOSPITAL,
THE GANG THAT GOT THERE FIRST AND CLAIMED IT WON'T IDENTIFY THEMSELVES. NO IDEA HOW OLD THE GROUP IS,
BUT ANOTHER GANG IS SAYING THAT THEY'VE ALL GOT SMALL MATCHING TATTOOS
SWIPE
SWIPE

...!
YOU KNOW WHAT WE'VE GOTTA DO!
NO, WE HAVE TO THINK OF THE BEST WAY TO MINIMIZE OUR DAMAGE.
Squatters from an unknown gang have the hospital surrounded
and claim it for Ugly Rainbow—
We have to outsmart them, beat them.
—PW.
PSYCHIC WORK!?
PROBABLY. IT'S CLOSE ENOUGH FOR US TO RECOGNIZE IT.
flop
YAP YAP

UNLIKE THE OTHER GANG, WE'VE GOT LOTS OF LITTLE KIDS WITH US. I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT WE HAVE TO MOVE CAREFULLY.
—SASU.
WHAT, DID YOU HAVE ANOTHER NIGHTMARE?
shake shake
DON'T BLUFF AGIRI'S BUSY, SO I'LL TAKE YOU TO GWEN
WHATEVER YOU SAY
I JUST WANT TO TAKE DOWN THOSE PW GUYS
WOOZ

NO, ME FIRST!
Yank
ME! ME FIRST!
HE'LL HEAR ME OUT FIRST!
Pull
OW OW OW OW OW!
FLAP
CALAVERA!

I WAS MOTIVATED TO WORK AFTER I WENT TO THAT SEMINAR!
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO DEPROGRAM ME!?
LOOK AT THOSE RESULTS! WE TOOK A HUGE LEAD!
OUR SECTION WOUND UP ON TOP!
DEPROGRAMMING IS SUPPOSED TO "REMOVE BRAIN-WASHING"?
LOOK... EVEN IF THAT WAS THE OUTCOME, YOU...
WHAT DID YOU TALK MY FAMILY INTO!?
I WAS THERE BECAUSE YOUR FAMILY REQUESTED IT THAT'S HOW IT WORKS ——
I GOT TONS OF REFERRALS BECAUSE OF MY PERFORMANCE!
WHO'S CALLING US A CULT?
THESE WOMEN ARE ALL HERE OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL
I CAN HAZARD A GUESS, BUT JUST CURIOUS—
HOW EXACTLY DOES YOUR DOCTRINE GO?
How funny.
This isn't a religion!
CALAVERA!

JUST THINKING WE SURE HAVE DEPROGRAMMED ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE...
YOU AREN'T GOING TO GET THROUGH THIS WITHOUT PUTTING UP A FIGHT!
HURRY AND GET OUT OF THERE!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME OR PLACE TO GET YOURSELF CARVED UP!
MY BODY FEELS HEAVY, LIKE IT'S COVERED IN MUD...
CALA-VERA!
SWOOSH
I CAN'T FIGHT THEM OFF——

fwsh
kaa
kaa
kaa
kaa
kaa
...IS THAT MINE?
HOW NICE OF YOU TO GIVE IT TO A PIECE OF MEAT LIKE ME

SANTA MUERTE.
...THIS SOUND— THIS SONG IS...!
SSSt
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
!?

OH!
YOU MUST BE WORN OUT, COMING ALL THE WAY OUT HERE
NOBIRU IS THIS WAY.
tap
tap
tap

IT LOOKED LIKE THAT "DAY OF THE DEAD" THING
YOU KNOW, FROM A DISTANCE,
BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE DIVED INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S MINDSCAPE. I DID TELL SORACHI NOT TO GET HIS HOPES UP.
ANYWAY, I'M GLAD I MADE IT IN TIME.

...TATEHARA...
—— The younger...!?